

AN
old 25
EPISTLE
TO
King Charles the II

SENT FROM
AMSTERDAM
IN
HOLLAND,
The 28. of the 10. month, 1660.

Wherein is contained certain Orders and Laws there, concerning the Liberty granted to those which cannot take up Arms, nor Swear, which Laws there do yet continue, As also several Arguments shewing that the People called Quakers are no Popish Recusants, who are cast into prison for not Swearing. With Advice & Direction to KING CHARLES, that His tendernesse may appear likewise to tender Consciences, who keep to their Tea and Nay, that if they break their Tea and Nay, they may be punished as for breaking an Oath.

William Caton.

L O N D O N,
Printed for Thomas Simmons at the signe of the Bull and
Mouth near Aldersgate, 1660.

J. King

EPISTLE

TO

King Charles the II

SENT FROM

AMSTERDAM

IN

THE YEAR 1658

The 28. of the 10. month, 1658.

As I have been informed by some of your Majesty's
Ambassadors, that your Majesty's Letters are
not only received, but also read, and that
your Majesty's Commands are executed, I have
thought fit to send you this Epistle, which
contains the Substance of what I have
written to your Majesty's Ambassadors, and
which I have thought fit to send you, that
you may be acquainted with the same.



Printed by J. Blom, at the Sign of the Star, in the City of Amsterdam.

Carole Rex,

FOrasmuch as the Lord hath been pleased to permit Thee to sit upon Thy Fathers Throne, and to sway the Scepter in *England*, after Thy sojourning some years in a strange Land, where Thou was invironed with strangers, and sometimes compassed about with many fears, and then did grief with sorrow of mind attend Thee, when Thy Subjects had dissented from Thee, Thy enemies prevailed over Thee, and Thy trusty Friends obstructed from communicating of their substance to Thee, thereby to have done Thee a pleasure: Dost Thou not yet remember how Thou was in those days dejected and cast down in Thy Spirit, when there was scarce hope remaining, of ever seeing such a day as this? And was there not then also much commiseration in Thy heart (in the day of Thy affliction, when Thou was a sufferer Thy self) towards suffering people? And didst Thou not then cry out against the oppression wherewith Thy Friends were oppressed, that could not conform in all things to the powers that then were the Supreme in the Nation of *England*? And was it not an evil, in Thy own judgement, in them then, that would not let people have their liberty to worship God in that way of which they were the most perswaded in their own hearts, that it was according to the way of God; whether they desired to have the Common-Prayer-Book, or the Directory, or to have their liberty to worship God without either of these, in Spirit and in Truth, which were before these were made, and in which the Saints worshipped God before these were framed or composed? Now certainly if it was an evil in them to debar people of their liberty in things appertaining unto the Worship of God, then must it

also be an evil now in them that will not give liberty to tender consciences in matters of worship which tendereth not to the breach of the peace of the Kingdom. And inasmuch (O King) as Thou Thyself hath found by experience an excellency in the liberty that was afforded Thee with Thy Friends in the time of Your exilement, in things appertaining unto your Worship: It is therefore the more hoped by some that thou wilt yet excel other Princes in this particular, considering Thy own condition: Surely if Thou, with those that out of love to Thee, exposed themselves to the inconveniency of exilement with Thee, had not been allowed to reside in any place, except You had been conformable to their Religion, and by an Oath to have bound your selves to have been true and faithful unto their Discipline, though it had been contrary to your consciences, this would by You have been accounted hard measure; nay moreover not only to have been debarred of your liberty in the place, but also to have forfeited your goods, chattels and your whole substance unto the Supreme Magistrate of that place, except you would have acted contrary to your consciences; surely you would not have approved well of this, neither would you have had it thus done unto you.

And now be it known to Thee (O King) that the Lord God of Heaven and Earth hath a little Flock in that Nation (where the Lord hath set Thee to sway the Scepter, and they are exceeding dear unto him, and precious in his sight, for they tender his Glory more than their natural lives, & his Commands more than their liberty: wherefore if thou desire that it may be well with Thee, and that Thy dayes may be prolonged in Thy Realm, be cautious how Thou layeth Thy hand upon them, as thereby to afflict them; or of suffering them to be oppressed by the Laws of Thy Kingdom, for abiding in the Doctrine of their Lord. For it hath been upon me from Him to signifie to Thee, That if thou suffer them to incur the danger of *premunire* upon them for abiding in the Doctrine of Christ, know, from the Lord, that their Estates, their goods and their Chattels shall not make Thee.

Thee rich, neither will they be blessed to Thee; and moreover, if they be excluded out of Thy protection for doing the will of their Master and for obeying his Command, they shall not therefore be shut out of the Protection of their God, who is both mighty to save, and mighty to deliver; And if thou should exclude Thy self out of His protection by Thy sinning against Him, and oppressing His people, then all Thy Forces under Thy Command within Thy Dominions, would not be able to deliver Thee out of the hands of Thy enemies, nor yet to preserve Thy Treasures out of the hands of spoilers.

It is well known already upon this side of the Seas, what a snare the Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy* are made unto the People of the Lord within Thy Dominions, and how that many of them are already cast into the common Goals for refusing to take them. Even as it was in the dayes of *Oliver Cromwel*; many of them were cast in prison (by such as acted in his name) for not taking the Oath of *Abjuration*, and other Oaths; And because they did not take it, therefore were they deemed to be Jesuites, by such as made that a snare for this People, even as they now that A& in Thy Name make the Oaths before mentioned, a snare to this People; and because they now take not these, therefore are they now deemed to be *Popish Recusants*, as before they were supposed to be Jesuites, when that some of them who was accused to be Jesuites had never learned the *Accedentes*, and so were far from being Jesuites; and now many of them are judged to be *Popish Recusants*, who peradventure do not know what a *Popish Recusant* is: Moreover it is well known that many *Popish Recusants* in the Nation go free, and have not these Oaths tendered them, yet through the envie of many that are in Authority, this People before mentioned are brought into external trouble about this very thing, which they are clear of, as they may see, that do understand the true intent and meaning of the A& which was made *anno tertio Jacobi Regis*, chap. 4. For the better discovering and repressing of *Popish Recusants*, in which A& the Oath of *Allegiance* is contained; and as for the other A& made

made *Anno primo Regina Elizabethæ* in order to the restoring to the Crown, &c. wherein the Oath of Supremacy is contained; This also is wrested, and made as a snare to the people before mentioned, when no places of Office are conferred upon them, neither do they nor none of them (that I know of) receive thy Fees nor Wages, and therefore not of those to whom the Oath of Supremacy is to be tendered; For they are known to be credible men that feareth God, and are absolutely against all Treasons, Plots and treacherous Conspiracies, whatsoever, both against Thee and all men, whole Yea, is as much to them, yea more than many mens Oaths are to them that will Swear; wherefore they might well be credited in and credited, for of their fidelity and innocency the Nation hath had much proof already; So that if it were not more out of malice to them, than out of love to Thee, or jealousy of them, these Oaths before mentioned would not be so frequently tendered to them by those that act in Thy Name, who might easily be prevented from troubling this peaceable people in this matter, by a few lines from Thee, being issued forth as an Order to the contrary by Thee, and thereby a stop might be put in part to the prosecution of that wickedness which is in the hearts of many in Authority at this day against this innocent people, who I do assure Thee are no *Popish Recusants*, and this I shall endeavour to manifest clearly to Thy understanding by some few plain and simple (yet sound) Arguments, as

First, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they own a mortal man to be the head of the Church, and the Church to be under the obedience of the Pope of Rome; but they own Christ Jesus only (who is immortal) to be the head of the Church, and it to be wholly under his obedience, and not under the Popes of Rome, and therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Secondly, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they swear and take oaths before Magistrates, if it were required of them; but they will not swear in no wise, though thereunto required by Magistrates, though they suffer for it, but do abide in the Doctrine of Christ, who said, *Swear not at all,*
and

and him they chuse to obey rather than Magistrates that require to Swear, and therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Thirdly, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they bow to Images, worship them, and honour them that are the works of mens hands: but they bow to no Image, neither do they worship or honour any Image which is made with mens hands, in the likeness of any thing in heaven above, or in the earth beneath; And therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Fourthly, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they own a *Purgatory* after this life; but they testifie against such Doctrine, and do not believe any such Fables, therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Fifthly, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they own Temporal Bread and Wine, after Consecration, to be the Body and Blood of Christ; but they believe and know that his Body (*which is meat indeed, and his Blood which is drink indeed*) is Spiritual and Incorruptable, and so not external bread and wine which will corrupt and decay after Consecration as before: and in this particular also they differ from the *Romish Catholics*, and therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Sixthly, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they observe dayes, and holi-dayes, and times, as *Christ-masse*, *Lent*, *Easter*, &c. but these, do they observe no more than other dayes and times; and therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Seventhly, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they use *Crosses* and *Crucifixes* with *Beads* and such like frivolous things; and they would also mark themselves with the signe of the *Crosse*, upon their foreheads, upon their mouths, upon their breasts, and from one side to the other; but *Crosses*, *Crucifixes* and *Beads* they reject, as the works of mens hands, which cannot make their worship any thing more acceptable unto God; neither do they at all mark themselves with the signe of the *Crosse*, as *Popish Recusants* do, therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Eighthly, If they were *Popish Recusants*, then would they

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mus fol. 5.

they pray for the dead, and unto the Saints that are dead, that they might pray to God for them that are alive in the flesh; but they do not pray for them that are outwardly dead, nor unto the Saints that are dead; but unto the Lord alone, in the Name of Christ, who giveth life and breath; and therefore are no Popish Recusants.

Ninthly, If they were Popish Recusants, then would they once a year at the least confesse their sins unto a Popish Priest, upon their bended knees, before the Virgin Mary, the Arch-Angel, John Baptist, Peter and Paul, and before all the Saints, as Popish Recusants imagine, and then would they pray unto these before mentioned for them to pray unto God for their Absolution, and after they had done thus would they receive an Absolution from the Priest, &c. but they confesse their sins unto God, who is able to remit and forgive them, and not unto Priests before the Saints that are dead; neither do they receive Pardons or Absolutions from any mortal man of, or for their sins, and therefore are they no Popish Recusants.

Fol 15,
16.17.

Tenthly, If they were Popish Recusants, then would they observe the Commands of the Church of Rome, which are chiefly these five, viz. First, That the Saints dayes be sanctified and kept holy. Secondly, That they hear Masse. Thirdly, That the Feast dayes be duly observed. Fourthly, That Confession of sins be made at the least once a year to the Priest. And finally that the Sacrament be received at or about the time of Easter: But these Commands and Institutions of the Church of Rome they renounce as superstitious traditions of men, with many more of their Ceremonies and Rudiments; And therefore are they no Popish Recusants.

Eleventhly, If they were Popish Recusants, then would they respect mens persons, as they Papists do, and have them in admiration because of advantage.

Twelfthly, If they were Popish Recusants, then would they wrestle with flesh and blood, and would put such to death as they judged to be Hereticks, that were not of their mind; But the weapons of their warfare are not carnal but spiritual; and therefore do not they wrestle with flesh and

and blood, but are absolutely against the taking away of any mans life, for his judgement or opinion in matters of Religion; And therefore are they no *Popish Recusants*.

Thirteenthly, and finally, if they were *Popish Recusants* then would they go on pilgrimage, hold up Temples, Tythes, Altars, Nuneries, Reliques, Indulgences, Inquisitions, then would they, like unto the *Romish Catholicks*, believe whatsoever the Church of Rome believeth; but in life and Doctrine, so well as in matters of faith do they differ from the Church of Rome, and that not only in the things before mentioned, but also concerning their seven Sacraments, and their Baptizing of Infants, and in many more things; And therefore may we safely conclude they are no *Popish Recusants*.

So that it clearly appears from what I have already said, that they are not such men as the Authors of that Act (which was made *Anno tertio Jacobi Regis Ch. 4.* wherein the oath of Allegiance is contained,) intended to have discovered and repressed, &c. And therefore may we conclude that the Magistrates sheweth this Oath to them, and maketh it a snare for them (whom they know will not swear;) Do it rather out of malice and envy, then in justice or equity. Now (O King) it is in thy Power to remedy this, if it were but in thy heart to do (something in order to the amending of it) according to the power thou hast in thy hand, then might this yoke soon be broken off the necks of the oppressed in thy Dominions.

Now if thou shouldest desire to have a way perscribed thee, how such a thing might be done, or would know where ever any Prince or Potentate did the like, when they had a People in their Dominions that could not swear nor take up Arms, &c.

Answer. I shall shew thee how a Magistrate did beyond the Seas, to tender consciences, that their Tea should be taken in place of an Oath, &c. But take a view of the order it self, or a Copy of the substance of it, which is as followeth.

W Hereafter hath been an Adress presented unto his Excellency in the behalf of certain Inhabitants of the City of Middlebrough, wherein complaint was made of the Magistrates of the said City; Who not long since hath caused the Shops of some Inhabitants to be shut up, and consequently hath forbid their trading,

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though it be their only means they have to maintain their Families by, and that this hath been the case (to wit) their refusing the taking the accustomed Oath as others have done; Yet nevertheless in appearance, that for certain years past they have paid all Taxes, Contributions and Customs belonging to the City, even equal with other Citizens and Inhabitants of the said City, though they had never taken the said Oath; and that willingly; And therefore ought they now to have their liberty without being molested in this particular, seeing they desire nothing else, then to live in the Enjoyment of the Liberty of their Consciences; In order to which this present war with the King of Spain was raised by his Subjects, the which now by the help of God is come so far, that the aforesaid Liberty of Conscience is obtained, and therefore it would be an evil thing to take it a way from these people, who through their paying of Taxes and Contributions and bearing of other burthens, (besides the great hazard both of their lives and Liberties) hath hapen to obtain it. And it appears that these people have declared that they are willing to be ruled according to the Ordinances of the City, yet nevertheless the Magistrates do and have striven with them about the Oath, which hath not only tended to the expelling of them out of the City, but consequently to the forcing out of a numberless company of others in Holland and Zealand, with their Wives and Children, to their utter ruine; And this would not tend to any mans profit, but on the contrary it would be a great apparant hinderance to these Lands, because thereby trading over all would greatly decrease.

And forasmuch as these people do proffer, that their yea shall stand instead of an oath, and the transgressors thereof to be punished as perjured persons; which thing his Excellency having taken into consideration, doth therefore with the advice of his Governour and Counsel of Zealand, Ordain and confirme, and by these presents be it Ordained, and confirmed, that the peoples yea aforesaid shall stand in stead of a Oath, before the Magistrates of the aforesaid City, and that the transgressors of the same shall be punished, as forswearers or perjured persons; Moreover his Excellency do charge and command the Magistrates of Middlebrough, with all others whom it doth concern, for the future not to burthen the Consciences of these people aforesaid any further with the oath, but that they should open their shops and follow their trading, as formerly they have done, &c.

This was given forth in his Excellencies Name, and under his Seal in the City of Middlebrough in Zealand the 26. of January, Anno, 1577. Here

Here followeth a Copy of another order which tendeth to the confirmation of the former.

Noble, honest, honourable, wise, discreet and special beloved.

W Hereas there are certain men, as it is said, dwelling in Middlebrough, who with complaints have at sundry times made known unto us, how that you are daily molesting them, so that in quietness and peace they cannot follow their trading, thereby to get a lively-hood for themselves and their Families, they being hindered from setting open their shops, under pretence of their Refusing the taking of the Oath, in such a forme as other Citizens have done, the which we have already taken into Consideration; And seeing that the aforesaid people do proper to bear their part of all reasonable burthens with other Citizens, they themselves being excused from bearing of Armes, so that you may order that for them at their charge or such as you shall appoint, bowbeit not to exceed equity and reason.

But however we think that you are to be blamed, that you suffer them not to live in quietness and peace according to their mind and conscience, and according to the Act, which with the advise of the Governour and Counsel we have formerly granted them, which they have shewed unto you, as they say, and nevertheless we have understood, that to this present day you will not observe it, nor our former Letters; We are therefore now finally necessitated to write this, by the which we do manifestly declare unto you, that it belongs not unto you in particular to trouble your selves about the consciences of any, if there be nothing done by them, which tendeth to the scandalizing of any; And in that particular we do not desire to respect or suffer any; and therefore we expressly charge and require you, that from henceforth you forbear molesting these people called Anabaptists, or from hindring them from following their Trades and their Merchandize, whereby they may get a lively-hood for their Wives and Children; And see that henceforth you suffer them to open their shops, and to follow their business, as heretofore they have done; and see that you take heed how ye are contrary to this, or to the Act before mentioned, or of taking any fines of these people for the cause aforesaid, while nothing is attempted by them, which might tend to the scandalizing of any man, they bearing their reasonable share of such burthens as do belong to the City, as well as others, &c.

Written at Antwerpen the

25. of July, 1578.

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Thus

Thus very Nobly did this *Prince of Orange*, undertake to procure these peoples freedom from that which envious men made a snare for them, like as some do now the *Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy*, as I have shewed before, and not only in this particular, but sometimes in other cases is swearing made a snare for the people of the Lord in thy Dominion, which snare thou might as easily break by an Order to the same purpose, even as he did by the Order or Orders aforesaid, by vertue of which, thousands at this day have their Liberty in this particular concerning swearing, under the States of *Holland*; and their yea to this day is as commonly taken before a Magistrate in the place of an oath, as an oath is from others, in matters of differences or other occasions, when in the Magistrates judgement there is need of an oath.

The Ho. Mo. Heeren Staten General of *Holland and West-vriissland* (So called) did in this particular follow the foot-steps of the beforementioned Prince, and the Governour and Counsel of *Zealand*. For upon a certain time when they had occasion for mony, after their great and tedious war with *Spain*, they made an order for to injoyne the Citizens and others, to pay them one *Gulder* out of a thousand, or one pound of every thousand, and upon their oathes were they to declare so near as they could, what their Estates were worth; But the States excepted the Anabaptists aforesaid from swearing, and ordered that their word should be taken for truth without an oath; yet if it could be proved that they did not speak the truth, then were they to be punished like the rest that swore falsely.

It is probable that thou thy self hast had knowledge of these things before now, being Thou hast been a Traveller in these parts in Thy own Person; Now the Anabaptists (so called) do not onely enjoy this Priviledge in these Low-Countries, but also Thy Kinsman, C. *Lodowicus Prince of Palatine*; He affordeth the same Liberty unto this People, who are neither constrained to swear, nor yet to bear Armes within His Dominions, no more then they are here in these united Provinces, where they are neither fined nor imprisoned for nor bearing of Armes, nor yet for refusing to Swear; But doth not the common Goales in *England* witnesse the contrary, which

which doth make the hearts of the Righteous sad, who have desired that Thou mightest so far have exceeded other Princes in giving Liberty to the Lords People, as He hath exceeded in mercy towards Thee, even beyond what He hath done or manifested for, or to other Princes? Oh therefore let none of them excell Thee, in Nobility, or any Vertue, but strive to be equall with them, if not to go beyond them, in every good work, and especially that, (*viz.*) in giving Liberty to tender Consciences.

Moreover (O King) if Thou be not satisfied in Thy self concerning the conscientiousnesse of those People in thy *Realme* (that cannot swear) the Touch of their Doctrines, and the equitableness of their Principles, then chuse forth some of Thy ablest Divines, and let them have a fair Dispute in Thy Presence, and in the presence of judicious Men that fear God, and will judge impartially of the things they shall hear discussed, that so the Truth may be manifested and embraced, and Error and erroneous opinions discovered and avoided. Hast Thou not read how that Prince Frederick of Palatine in the year 1571 did grant forth an order for a Dispute betwixt a People called *Wederdoopers*, or Anabaptists, and the Priests, and how He caused the aforesaid Order to be published throughout His Dominion, in all Cities and Villages, that all His Subjects might have timely notice of it, and He appointed two or three men to take care that things were kept in good order, and that each Party had free Liberty to speak, what they understood and thought good concerning the things propounded; And He also caused ready writers to be appointed, to take what was spoken in writing, and all was to have their Liberty to speak one by one.

And that none of the Anabaptists might refrain coming, by reason of expences, or want of money to bear their charge; The Prince therefore undertook to take care to provide lodging, with meat and drink, for them that were appointed to mannage the Dispute, during the continuance of it, which was 19. dayes; and every one was to be admitted to hear, whether they were Anabaptists, or whatsoever they were, and the Prince himself was present at much of it, as appears by the *Protocol*.

These

These People called Anabaptists, had suffered exceeding much persecution before the Dispute before-mentioned; & when the Prince saw that they could not be well suppressed with violence, then did He grant forth the Order aforesaid for the Dispute; and those were a sort of people that were not conformable in many things to the generality of his Subjects, in that they would not baptize their Infants, neither would they swear in any wise; neither would they take up Armes, &c. So the Prince being in a strait concerning them, did as aforesaid; And afterwards came they to obtain Liberty and Freedom, not onely in the *Paulz*, but also in the Low-Countries, where at this day there are many thousands of them; And surely it hath been for the States profit that they have been suffered, and that they have given them that liberty which they have afforded them; And so will it be for Thy benefit, to give liberty to that People in Thy Dominion, who abide in the Doctrine of Christ, and cannot swear at all, though I know some may endeavour to perswade Thee to the contrary, like as *Haman* did perswade the King *Ahasuerus* against the Jews, saying, *There is a certain People scattered abroad, and dispersed among the People in all The Provinces of Thy Kingdom, and their Lawes are divers from all People, neither keep they the Kings Lawes, therefore it is not for the Kings profit to suffer them; even so mayest Thou be instigated against the Lords People, who are as dear unto him as the Apple of his eye; These things lay upon me to communicate to Thee, some of which may serve as Presidents and examples for Thee, whereby Thou may in part see how to make a progress into that which the Lord requires of Thee; Wherefore consider of them with Thy Counsel, and if the Lord put it into your hearts to do good, do it quickly, before your glasse be run, and your day spent.*

Hest. 3. 8.

And though many of those Anabaptists did abuse their liberty, and so came to suffer for it formerly, in breaking their yea, yet the Law remaineth still, which thousands have the benefit of to this day, that keep to their yea, In the united provinces and in *Germanie*. And the people called *Quakers*, have had opportunities and provocations enough to have taken up Armes, and to have defended themselves, and who have suf-
that

ferred more then ever, they did, that broke their word, and that you know, and are convinced of; therefore have they chosen sufferings by all the powers before you, knowing that their Kingdom and their Glory is not of this World, therefore do they not fight for the Kingdomes of this World.

THE END.
